

Message Text

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PAGE 01 HESIN 01876 101419Z

43

ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 MCT-01 SY-05 CAB-02 CIAE-00

COME-00 DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 CIEP-01 FAA-00

SS-15 NSC-05 /056 W

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R 101305Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY HELSINKI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 450

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAIR, FI

SUBJECT: AIRPORT SECURITY

REF: STATE 212490

1. EMBOFF DISCUSSED MATTER WITH CIVIL AVIATION BOARD
LEGAL OFFICIAL METSALAMPI, AND EMPHASIZED CONTINUING
CONCERN OF USG, AS WELL AS AVAILABILITY OF FAA PROGRAMS.

2. METSALAMPI INDICATED FINLAND NOW FOLLOWING EUROPEAN
CIVIL AVIATION CONFERENCE (ECAC) STANDARDS WHICH HE
CHARACTERIZED AS MORE STRINGENT THAN ICAO. THESE
INCLUDE CHECK OF ALL PASSENGERS AND CABIN LUGGAGE ON
INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS, INCLUDING USE OF X-RAY AND
METAL DETECTION EQUIPMENT. ACCESS TO DEPARTURE-TRANSIT
AREA IS RESTRICTED TO TICKETED PASSENGERS
(INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS), EMPLOYEES, AND ACCREDITED
DIPLOMATIC OR CONSULAR OFFICIALS, WHO WOULD BE SCREENED.

3. FINNS AWARE OF FAA PROGRAMS. FINLAND HAS RATIFIED
BOTH HAGUE AND MONTREAL CONVENTIONS.

4. WITH REFERENCE TO PARA 3 REFTEL, SUBSTANTIAL
IMPROVEMENT IN SCREENING OF PASSENGERS FOR INTER-
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PAGE 02 HESIN 01876 101419Z

NATIONAL FLIGHTS HAS OCCURRED IN PAST YEAR.

HOWEVER, OTHER SECURITY ASPECTS OF HELSINKI AIRPORT ITSELF ARE QUESTIONABLE. CHECKED BAGGAGE IS ONLY RARELY SCREENED BUT ALWAYS ON THE OCCASIONAL CHARTER FLIGHT TO ISRAEL. DOMESTIC FLIGHTS, FOR WHICH NO SECURITY MEASURES ARE EMPLOYED, USE SAME OUTSIDE LOADING APRON (DIFFERENT GATES) AS INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS AND ACCESS TO EXTERIOR OF PLANES IS POSSIBLE, AND OCCASIONALLY WHEN LOADING RAMPS NOT IN USE, DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS MAY BE BOARDING SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH NO BARRIER BETWEEN PASSENGERS. AIRPORT TERMINAL CONSISTS OF LARGE CENTRAL HALL, WITH TRANSIT AREA SEPARATED BY GLASS DISPLAY CASES, PASSPORT BOOTHS AND OTHER LESS THAN CEILING-HIGH BARRIERS (MAXIMUM HEIGHT ABOUT TEN FEET). GENERAL SECURITY OVER SIDE DOORS, INCLUDING DOORS TO FLIGHT AREA APPEARS TO BE SOMEWHAT CASUAL, ALTHOUGH THERE IS A POLICE OFFICE, EMPLOYING CLOSED-CIRCUIT MONITORS.

5. FINNS CONSIDER SECURITY ADEQUATE FOR POTENTIAL THREAT. MAJOR FACTOR CITED IS VIRTUAL ABSENCE OF TRANSIT PASSENGERS, AS NEARLY ALL FLIGHTS ORIGINATE OR TERMINATE HERE. ALSO, MOST TERMINATING FLIGHTS ARE EITHER CHARTERS OR OF WESTERN EUROPEAN ORIGIN. SPECIFIC SECURITY MEASURES ARE DESIGNED TO PREVENT HIJACK OF INTERNATIONAL FLIGHT, AND TO PROTECT AIRPORT OF DESTINATION (AT LEAST UNTIL CHECKED BAGGAGE RETURNED TO PASSENGER). WITH RESPECT TO THREAT ORIGINATING FROM WITHIN FINLAND, AIRPORT IS GUARDED LIKE OTHER PUBLIC PLACES. FINNS ALSO APPEAR TO PERCEIVE THREAT AS LESS THAN AVERAGE DUE TO GEOGRAPHIC AND POLITICAL FACTORS.

6. EMBASSY BELIEVES MAJOR INCREASE IN FINNISH SECURITY EXPENSES UNLIKELY, FOR BUDGETARY REASONS. AIRPORT IS SOMEWHAT VULNERABLE TO ATTACK ORIGINATING FROM INCOMING FLIGHT, OR FROM WITHIN FINLAND, BUT RISK OF MAJOR TERRORIST ASSAULT AT INTERMEDIATE STOP OR FLIGHT ORIGINATING FROM HELSINKI APPEARS SMALL.

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PAGE 03 HELSIN 01876 101419Z

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